

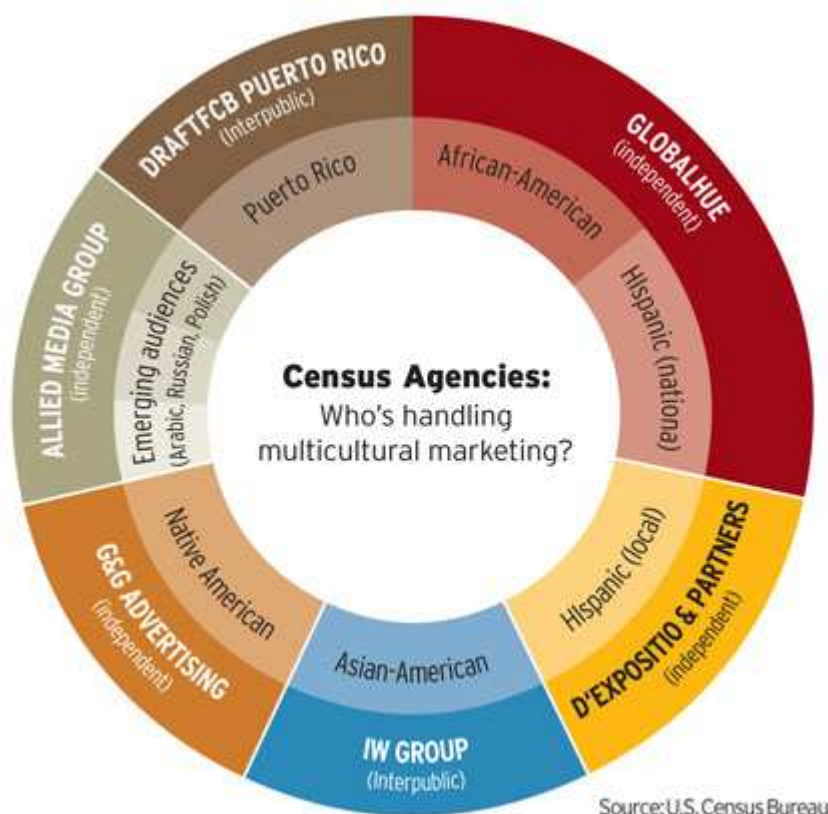
AdvertisingAge®

U.S. Census Spends Big to Reach Out to Minorities

Government Bureau Works With Ethnic Shops to Build Trust, Allay Fears

By [Laurel Wentz](#)

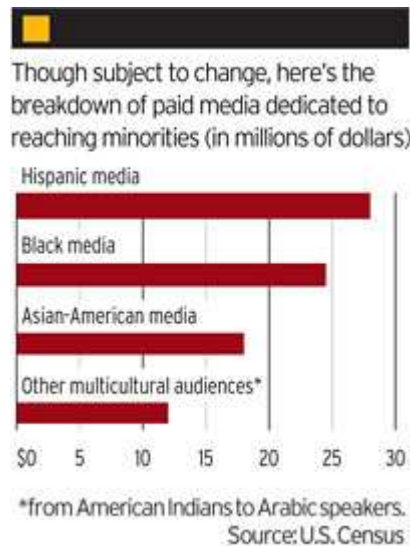
Published: October 26, 2009



SPREADING THE WORD: The Census Bureau is working with five multicultural advertising agencies and one general-market shop to encourage different ethnic groups to stand up and be counted. The ad efforts are aimed at reaching the hardest-to-count groups, and will kick off in January.

NEW YORK (AdAge.com) -- Multicultural experts expect the 2010 census to boost ad spending toward minority groups as awareness of their numbers grows -- but first, they have to be accurately counted.

To overcome immigration-status fears and general mistrust of the government, the U.S. Census Bureau is allocating the majority of the estimated \$145 million paid-media budget -- out of a total census effort of \$300 million -- to multicultural audiences. It's working with five ethnic shops, plus general-market agency DraftFCB's Puerto Rico office to cover its territory. Their ad efforts to reach the hardest-to-count U.S. inhabitants will kick off in January 2010.



Separately, Spanish-language broadcasters Univision Communications and Telemundo have already started aggressive public-service campaigns with the theme "Be counted" and are integrating their own messages about the value of the census for the Latino community into all their platforms. Univision is building off its previous push to mobilize Hispanics to apply for citizenship -- 1.4 million did -- and to register to vote last year, said Cesar Conde, president of Univision Networks. "We've put the gang together again [for the census campaign]."

Univision anchor Maria Elena Salinas, part of the earlier effort, appears in Univision's census ads explaining, "If they don't count us, we won't count."

Related story:

[How the U.S. Census Is Reading Your Mind](#)

Why Some Are More Likely Than Others to Respond, and What Would Make Them Participate

Don Browne, president of NBC Universal-owned Telemundo Communications Group, pointed out that Nielsen will use census figures to allocate its meters, adding more Hispanics where the Latino population is growing rapidly. "If you're in the Hispanic media business, this will dramatically affect ratings and growth in Spanish-language media," he said.

Big shift

The census will also highlight demographic changes, such as U.S.-born Hispanics surpassing immigrants as the biggest source of Hispanic growth, and will encourage marketers to shift more dollars to target Hispanics, he said.

GlobalHue, the biggest multicultural agency, is handling census ads targeted at Hispanics and blacks. For multicultural audiences, agencies are picking from the five mind-sets identified by DraftFCB that are most relevant for their groups (see story, adjacent page).

Luciana Gomez, the GlobalHue VP-group account director in charge of the Spanish-language census campaign, said Hispanics tend to fall into the "head noddors," "insulated" and "unacquainted" categories. The last group consists mostly of recent immigrants unfamiliar with the census and suspicious of what the government will do with the information.

Ms. Gomez said copy testing indicated that a focus on children and their future, and how the census influences funding and helps their community grow would work best for all three groups. "Hispanics will go through a lot of sacrifice for their children, and we're just asking for ten minutes of their time," she said.

For the black community, "there's knowledge of the census, they just haven't seen evidence it makes a difference," said GlobalHue VP-account director Damien Reid.

Beyond Hispanic

Another Hispanic shop, D Exposito & Partners, is responsible for local media, digital and PR for Hispanic audiences. The agency also came up with the creative concept for all audiences, including the general market, for the crucial phase when census workers go door-to-door in pursuit of non-responders who ignore the census questionnaire and follow-up mailing. That message is: "Open the doors to the census, and the census will open doors for you."

Of the estimated \$82 million destined for paid ethnic media -- although those numbers could change -- about \$28 million would go to Hispanic media, \$24.5 million to black media and \$18 million to Asian-American media. Another \$12 million would target other multicultural audiences, from American Indians to Arabic speakers. For the first time, the census website will be fully bilingual in English and Spanish, and will include assistance guides in 59 other languages.

*Allied Media Corp. has a tough task in reaching speakers of Arabic, Russian, Polish, Ukrainian, Armenian and Farsi, many of whom fled their nations out of fear of the government, said Account Manager Paul Young.

But Asian-American agency IW Group's job is the most complex of all the census agencies. Although Asian Americans only account for about 4% of the U.S. population, there are so many different language groups that advertisers often stretch their budgets by casting generic pan-Asian actors in ads and do voice-overs for different languages.

"We're in uncharted territory," said IW Account Director Charmaine David. Her agency is doing 24 TV commercials -- one spot for each of the three census phases, in eight different languages, plus 36 radio spots in 12 languages and 39 print ads in 13 languages. br />

~ ~ ~

CORRECTION: An earlier version of this misidentified Allied Media Corp. as Allied Media Group.

Copyright © 1992-2009 [Crain Communications](#) | [Privacy Statement](#) | [Contact Us](#)